

Abstract of the Disclosure:

An instant messaging system allows an instant message recipient to generate a contact list of potential senders of instant messages. This contact list is segmented in to a plurality of sub lists each containing a list of pre-approved potential instant message senders. Each sub list may contain a list of potential instant messengers interested in a particular focus I.e., issue, subject mater, etc.). Some names of potential instant messengers may be common to more than one list. Each individual sub list is by recipient selection subject to certain conditions (i.e., set by a recipient) of acceptance or non-acceptance of instant messages addressed to the recipient. Conditions may encompass items as availability of the recipient, busyness of eh recipient, relations between sender and recipient, cause of the message such as an emergency, and other categories to be set by the recipient.